Appendix A: Public Engagement Record

The State of Montana solicited public comment by announcing a public comment period and holding a public hearing for the 2020-2021 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). Every comment received in writing and provided verbally at the hearing was considered. All comments received and the State's responses are outlined below. An official transcript of the public hearing as well as documentation showing outreach completed (tear sheets and affidavits of publication for print advertisements and proof of electronic announcement) are also attached.

Comments Received and Responses Thereto

Shyla Patera, IL Specialist, North Central Independent Living Services, Inc., and Montana Independent Living Community Living Task Force

Comment #1:

Good morning, Commerce and DPHHS staff. For the record, my name is Shyla Patera. I represent North Central Independent Living, and also am a member of the Montana Independent Living Community Living Task Force, which helps Montanans navigate services to stay independent in their communities. I will be submitting written comments, but a few of the things that I would like to focus on today remind us that COVID is still present, and for many of us with disabilities and low income, we may be still needing to utilize rental assistance. So I'm hoping that a lot of the people that I've referred and have disabilities have been using it as well, but I'd like to see that tracked; and if in the future, when COVID funding doesn't manifest itself in the same way, if we could formalize some rental assistance through HRDCs and other things, and also work with eviction and homeless prevention in that way. During our stay at home orders, and particularly again I'm also hearing about the need -- not necessarily the need for food, but making sure that I have enough funding, if someone is on SSI or SSDI, to maintain things. And I know during the stay at home, obviously it was very vital. Our centers are working on vaccines and different things to make sure that we all maximize the use of our vaccines and medical assistance where needed. As a homeless and infrastructure advocate, a lot of times, in non-COVID times and even during COVID times, I've been assisting people who may be meeting homelessness that have come out of institutions, such as Warm Springs, nursing homes, and other institutions such as veterans homes, or other needs. I would like to see us take advantage of the new rules for MFP, which is money follows a person, and make sure that that is the strongest we can make it. On our emergency sheltering grants, I would like to see a lot of information disseminated, not just from members, but what is actually needed by persons with disabilities or mental health. A lot of communities don't have access to substance use disorders or co-occurring shelters or accessible shelters, and sometimes sheltering managers aren't sure what to do regarding Medicaid and home and community based service assistance. So if that is something we can work on, and even working with Medicare as well to see if we can get home and community based services, both in-home and beyond indoor shelters, so that someone could at least have support while they're facing homelessness, or potential diversion from homelessness would be a great opportunity. As far as construction and infrastructure, I believe that we need to have a rehabilitation HOME fund for those that are currently in home and can't afford new universally designed construction. As always NCILS, which I work for, and the other centers, advocate for accessible affordable housing in universal design and visible concepts. We hope that bonds or be undertaken to encourage development of those homes, particularly when requests come before the Board of Housing as well, including like ADA, the small competitive grant, CDBG and CDD still have. I'm hoping that we can coordinate our sidewalk and community development, so that we're not walking to nowhere as well, and hopefully communities will use Main Street Development, and also partner with MDT, and others to look at bus and bus facility improvements, if they need facilities for -- and use them for transit as well. And I will be submitting written comments beyond these, and I'd like to congratulate everyone at Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Department of Housing, and Montana DPHHS for the work in partnering forward, and I hope that you contact your Centers for Independent Living in Montana to include those advocates and consumers where necessary. Thank you very much.

Response to Comment #1:

The State of Montana is prioritizing rental assistance for all Montanans with need through its Emergency Rental Assistance program (https://housing.mt.gov/Rental-Housing/Montana-Emergency-Rental-Assistance-Program), which targets households who have lost household income as a direct or indirect result of the COVID-19 pandemic and are at risk of housing instability. Through this program, which launched April 5, 2021, low-income renters can receive up to \$2,200 per month for rent payments, up to \$300 for utilities, and up to \$50 per month for internet for assistance needed as far back as April 1, 2020. Because this program is adequately funded, preferences for persons with disabilities are not available at this time. However, other assistance programs do provide such preference. For example, Montana's Mainstream Voucher and Section 811 Project Rental Assistance programs, which are both administered by Montana Departments of Commerce (Commerce) and Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) jointly. These programs serve households that include at least one family member with a disability who is between the ages of 18 and 62 years old, allowing them to live independently in their communities by pairing affordable housing with supportive services. Commerce and DPHHS encourage Montanans in need of rental assistance and those that serve them to consider utilizing the Emergency Rental Assistance, Mainstream Voucher, and Section 811 Project Rental Assistance programs.

Individuals seeking assistance with filling out Emergency Rental Assistance applications can schedule an online appointment, get help in person, or request a paper application and/or assistance from one of the State's partner organizations. Of note, as of June 28, 2021, Commerce has awarded over \$8.9 million in Emergency Rental Assistance funds to 1,524 Montanans. For comparison, Arizona has disbursed \$7.9 million (https://des.az.gov/erap-dashboard) and Kansas has disbursed \$8.7 million (https://kshousingcorp.org/emergency-rental-assistance). Montana exceeded the \$8.4 million awarded under the 2020 CARES Act program (administered over approximately 8 months from May 7 to December 31, 2020) in less than 3 months. The average assistance provided per approved applicant in 2020 was \$3,390; the current average assistance provided under the 2021 program is \$5,884.

Commerce, Montana Housing, is partnering with the Montana Legal Services Association to form the Montana Eviction Intervention Project to provide civil legal assistance for Montanans facing evictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As noted in a recent Associated Press article (https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/montana/articles/2021-06-25/explainer-how-montana-will-use-funds-to-limit-evictions) "Beginning last October, the state created the Montana Eviction Intervention Project, in partnership with the Montana Legal Services Association, to provide legal help to low-income renters facing eviction. Since then, attorneys have helped with 264 evictions statewide, helping 608 clients and their family members... No clients assisted under the Montana Eviction Intervention Project have moved to a shelter or became homeless, the Montana Legal Services Association said."

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act) amended the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, significantly revising the Emergency Shelter

Grants Program by renaming it the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program and shifting focus to a housing first philosophy. ESG can still fund shelters, although historically it has not done so as there is a limit on the amount of funding that can go to shelter activities and regular ESG funding is a small grant itself. Therefore, ESG is allocated to the HRDCs as subrecipients through the designated funding matrix. Subrecipients have the option to fund shelters with regular ESG, and a couple do in a very small capacity, however the established need presented is to focus the limited funding for rental assistance. If shelters are not receiving ESG funds, the State does not have the ability through the ESG program to ensure accessibility and access requirements are met, or to monitor case manager abilities to ensure adequate provisions are in place for clients with disabilities. If a shelter is funded, it must (1) be accessible in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 8; the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 100; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.) and 28 CFR part 35; where applicable; (2) consult with the specific requirements to be in compliance with 24 CFR Part 8 if undertaking shelter alterations; (3) provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities to enable program participants with a disability to have an equal opportunity to participate in the program or activities; and (4) communicate and make known that use of ESG funded facilities, assistance, and services are available to all on a nondiscriminatory basis. Subrecipients must develop and implement affirmative outreach written procedures and communication tools and materials to inform persons without regard to race, color, creed, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, national origin, familial status, or disability, how to obtain access to facilities and services. For additional requirements, interested parties can refer to the ESG Manual section on Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Requirements, which begins on page 63 and is available on DPHHS's website here: https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/hcsd/documents/esgpolicymanual.pdf.

The State of Montana relies on local stakeholders to identify specific supports needed in their communities and asks that stakeholders propose locally supported projects that address identified needs. Montana's Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development identifies as a critical need services to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, so projects that directly address the needs of this population are prioritized. In addition, Commerce and DPHHS continue to collaborate on housing and healthcare. See the State's 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan for more information: https://commerce.mt.gov/shared/ConPlan/docs/2020/2020-2024-Con-Plan-Final.pdf.

Montana's HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) can be used to fund the development of newly constructed homes that are accessible and visitable. Montana's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program can be used to fund the rehabilitation of existing homes for accessibility and visitability. The State of Montana encourages communities to seek funding for both the development and rehabilitation of homes that meet accessibility and visitability standards. For more information about the HOME and CDBG programs, click on the following links: https://comdev.mt.gov/Programs-and-Boards/Community-Development-Block-Grant-Program/Housing.

Heather McMilan, Project Development Director, Homeword, Inc.

Comment #2:

I want to thank the Department for all of their work. My name is Heather McMilan. I am the project development director for Homeword. I testified yesterday at the Annual Action Plan, and would reiterate those comments, but also I want to thank staff for all the work in the restructuring you all have done, I know this is a lot in the last 18 months, and we appreciate you all. I'd like to support Shyla's

testimony as well. Some of the things that we talked about yesterday and could carry forward to today is that there are long term impacts to our housing markets across the board for probably the next decade to come. And so I'm advocating today that all the resources that we've typically gotten, but also resources that are coming in without rules at this point, that we try to open up the bandwidth, and try to make sure with all the federal rules that we don't restrict, more restrict as you are able to do, as a jurisdiction, at the State level, because I think we don't know all of the problems we're going to have, and that we need to be as flexible as we can to address homelessness, also low to moderate income, and even middle income, as our housing markets are stressed, and land and home prices skyrocket, both on rental and homeownership. So any flexibility you can all have. You've always been great partners, but just reiterating that we need to remain as flexible as possible, and get as creative as possible over the next period of time as we're addressing needs, all of the existing needs, that they're being complicated by long term impacts of costs. It creates labor shortages and housing stock shortages. I would say there was testimony to this effect, and if you all could consider that there are projects that are surviving right now that were in various stages of development, or preservation, or trying to get started, or completing, and these are issues that have significant financial impacts for for-profit and non-profit groups. And if there is a way that we can work with Montana Housing. They've already passed a cost per unit waiver on those projects for what has happened, and the impacts we've seen over the last 18 months. If there's a way to potentially add resources to those projects that have already been funded without unintended consequences to help with some of those costs, that would be wonderful, as well as keeping as many resources as we can to move new projects forward, both in rehabilitation, preservation, and new construction. Thank you again for all of your work, and there is nothing simple about how things are going today. We appreciate you guys listening and taking the testimony.

Response to Comment #2:

The State of Montana strives to balance program flexibility with administrative considerations. If additional program flexibilities are needed and are not provided for in the State's Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans (AAPs), Montana will consider amendments as needed. Some flexibility for funding allocations is already provided for in existing planning documents. Under CDBG, HOME, and HTF, the Director of Commerce is authorized to reallocate up to 15% of each program's planned total allocation among grant categories during each plan year. A reallocation of more than 15% of a program's total allocation or the creation or elimination of a grant category within a program would necessitate an amendment to the applicable AAP and may require an amendment to the corresponding Consolidated Plan as well. Montana encourages prospective and current grantees to communicate both community and project-specific needs as they arise.

The State of Montana is actively assessing options for supporting existing projects that are facing budget shortfalls and other challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Grantees with concerns related to funded projects should work with their program specialists and Commerce leadership directly to ensure continued project feasibility. Additionally, grantees are encouraged to review application guidelines for upcoming application cycles for further direction.

Page 1	Page 3
1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOCUS GROUP	1 WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were
2	2 had and testimony taken, to-wit:
3 SPONSORED BY MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE	3 ****
4 2020-2021 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND	4 MS. EGLI: Okay. It's 11:00, so we're
5 EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER) PUBLIC HEARING	5 going to go ahead and begin our CAPER
6	6 presentation. For those of you who maybe are just
7	7 joining, my name is Janelle Egli, and I'm going to
8	8 be facilitating our presentation, and then also
9 TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS	9 our comments section or portion of this hearing
10	10 today.
11	So first I'll start off by saying
12	12 welcome to the public hearing of the 2020-2021
13 Janelle Egli, Facilitator	13 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation
14	14 Report, which we abbreviate throughout this
15 Via Zoom	15 presentation as the CAPER.
16	This presentation, this hearing, is
17 June 23, 2021	17 sponsored by the Montana Departments of Commerce
18 11:00 a.m.	18 and Health and Human Services. These are the
19	19 agencies that oversee our Consolidated Plan
20 REPORTED BY: LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR	20 processes for the State of Montana, and so yes,
21 LESOFSKI COURT REPORTING	21 they're sponsoring.
22 7 WEST SIXTH AVENUE, Suite 2C	The Department of Commerce makes
23	23 reasonable accommodations for persons with
24	24 disabilities, or who have limited English
25	25 proficiency, and who wish to participate in these
Page 2	Page 4
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June 23, 2021 Page 5 Page 7 1 that process is for participation once we get So there are three basic objectives of 2 there. So with those housekeeping items, we'll go 2 the Consolidated Plan, and they are to provide 3 ahead and continue. 3 decent housing; provide a suitable living So the CAPER public participation 4 environment; expand economic opportunities. And process is what we're going to go over first. So these three objectives really guide all of the just for a little bit of context, the State of activities that happen under the Consolidated Plan Montana, through both the Departments of Commerce and the programs that are administered therein. 7 and Public Health and Human Services, develops a 8 And then in addition to those 9 five year plan to guide policy and investment for 9 objectives, there are also some outlined goals 10 that Montana adheres to. The first goal is to housing, economic, and other community development. 11 preserve and construct affordable housing; the 11 12 The five year plan is also referred as 12 second goal is to plan for communities; the third 13 the Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community 13 goal is to improve and sustain public 14 Development. We actually just got our most recent 14 infrastructure; the fourth goal is to revitalize five year plan approved by HUD, and just for note, 15 local economies; and the fifth goal is to reduce this five year plan, and then the other plans and 16 homelessness. reports under it, are all required by the US And under the Consolidated Plan, there 17 Department of Housing and Urban Development or are some specific programs that are administered. 18 19 HUD. The first program is the Community Development Block Grant, also referred to as CDBG; and we also 20 And these documents, and specifically 21 the five year plan, assess Montana's needs and administer the Emergency Solutions Grant, or ESG; current conditions, as well as determine the Home Investment Partnerships Program, or HOME; priorities and allocate HUD funding. So it's a Housing Trust Fund, or HTF. 24 really important document for us, when it comes to We do not administer the State's housing 24 25 managing our HUD grants, and trying to address the 25 opportunities for persons with AIDS, also referred Page 6 Page 8 1 needs throughout the state. 1 to is HOPWA, and I'll talk a little bit more about So this CAPER public participation 2 that in just a second. It's managed outside of process is important because it allows the State 3 the Consolidated Plan. of Montana to hear the perspectives and the But we'll circle back to CDBG. So under 5 opinions of private citizens and those 5 the CDBG program, there are some different 6 representing various organizations that are activities that happen that are supported by that affected by the Consolidated Plan, and funding pot. Those include housing, which 8 specifically by outcomes that we report in the 8 includes rental development and single family 9 CAPER. 9 rehabilitation; public facilities; community And the perspectives and opinions shared facilities; planning, and economic development. 10

- 10
- 11 really help Commerce and DPHHS to basically
- modify, when needed, our documents, and in this
- case specifically the Draft 2020-2021 CAPER, which
- 14 falls under the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan, which
- is the most recent five year plan approved by HUD. 15
- We hope that with your input that we can 16
- ensure the housing and community development needs 17
- across Montana are identified and addressed, and
- 19 also that they're identified and addressed in an
- 20 efficient manner.
- And although I'm sure many of you have 21
- 22 participated in hearings of the Consolidated Plan
- 23 in the past, we will go over just a little
- 24 overview of the Consolidated Plan goals and
- 25 objectives.

- And then there's the ESG grant, which
- 12 really is geared towards addressing homelessness
- 13 needs in the State; and then under the HOME
- 14 Program, we do rental development, single family
- development, and rental rehabilitation.
- In addition to those, we also do home 16
- 17 buyer assistance, which in Montana is essentially
- down payment assistance. And then for the Housing
- Trust Fund program, activities include rental
- 20 development, single family development, and rental
- rehabilitation. 21
- 22 And as I mentioned just a second ago,
- 23 HOPWA is managed outside of the Consolidated Plan,
- 24 and if you want more information about Montana's
- 25 HOPWA grant -- which is competitive, and not

Page 9 Page 11 1 formula, which is why it's not really addressed in 1 were some categories that were not awarded funds 2 the Consolidated Plan -- you can contact Julianna 2 during this year. 3 Crowley, and the email is provided here for her. For HOME, we awarded four grants. This 3 That's icrowley@mt.gov. 4 included three new construction grants, and one Okay. So the Consolidated Plan has some rehabilitation grant. And for HTF we had two 6 different key documents, and we'll go over them awards, both of those for rehabilitation. here. So the first that I'll mention is the Five For all of the programs together, Year Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community 8 including the ESG, a total of just over \$14.1 9 Development. As I mentioned, we're currently in 9 million was spent in program year one. CDBG the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan period, and this 10 expended a little over \$5.5 million; HOME expended is a strategic plan that guides housing and 11 a little over \$4 million; HTF was pretty much in 12 community investment, as stated earlier. 12 line with HOME, expending a little over \$4 And then under the umbrella of the five 13 million; and then ESG expended close to \$300,000. 13 14 year plan, we have the Annual Action Plan, and The actual figures are given here. then the Consolidated Annual Performance and 15 Then we've broken out expenditures 16 Evaluation Report. And these are both annual 16 according to goal and program in the table provided on this slide for your reference. And 17 documents, so we do them every single year. For Annual Action Plans or AAP's, we one thing to note is that we have the percentages 18 prepare them each year of the Consolidated Plan 19 listed for both planned goals and outcomes, and period, and these outline specific activities and then actual goals and outcomes. goals, as well as objectives, for a given program 21 And then just a couple of things to note year. So we take the goals that are outlined in 22 here. The majority of funds for preserve and 23 the five year plan, we break them out on a year to 23 construct affordable housing come from HOME and

Page 10 Page 12

24 HTF. All of our CDBG funds -- or sorry -- all of

25 our planning activities come from CDBG funds.

1 And then for the Consolidated Annual

25 do in this specific program year.

- 2 Performance and Evaluation Report, also known as
- 3 the CAPER, which this hearing pertains to our

24 year basis, and state this is what we're going to

- 4 2020-2021 CAPER, these are also annual reports.
- 5 They detail our use of funds, our progress towards
- 6 meeting goals and objectives, and they just
- 7 contain a lot of good information about where our
- 8 programs sit as far as spending money, and what
- 9 kinds of activities we've been able to undertake,
- 10 and possibly also challenges that we have seen as
- 11 we've administered our programs.
- Let's see here. I guess I'll also note
- 13 that for the 2020-2021 CAPER, it is specifically
- 14 for the first year of the 2020-2024 Consolidated
- 15 Plan, and our program years run from April 1st to
- 16 March 31st. And so this specific CAPER runs April
- 17 1st, 2020 to March 31st, 2021.
- So as far as the accomplishments that
- 19 we've made and progress that we've made, we're
- 20 just going to spend some time to go over those
- 21 right now in the following slides.
- 22 So for CDBG, we awarded 27 grants during
- 23 year one, and this included eight public
- 24 facilities grants, four community facilities
- 25 grants, 15 planning grants, and that is it. There

- And we actually exceeded our original
- 2 goal of investment in public infrastructure. We
- 3 had planned on 39 percent, and we actually
- 4 achieved 72 percent of funds. And I think that's
- 5 all I wanted to highlight.
- 6 The total expended dollars for each of
- 7 the goals are listed here at the bottom of the
- 8 table. And I guess I can just quickly note that
- 9 for preserve and construct affordable housing, we
- 10 spent just over \$8 million; and for public
- 11 infrastructure we spent close to \$4 million.
- All of these numbers are reported in the
- 13 CAPER, and so if you want to delve deeper into the
- 14 numbers, we welcome you to take a look at those
- 15 and to look at our CAPER, and I will give you the
- 16 location for that if you haven't come across it
- 17 already. We'll do that a little further on into
- -- il
- 18 the presentation.
- So for goals and outcomes, we have them
- 20 broken out here in this table by goal, and we have
- 21 the specific way that we're measuring our progress
- 22 listed here, and this is all presented in our
- 23 CAPER documents.
- 24 And couple things that I'll highlight
- 25 for you is that we were able to assist 3,803

Page 13 Page 15 1 persons under the goal of improve and sustain 1 rehabilitation of existing units, we had a goal, a 2 public infrastructure. For planning for 2 one year goal of 26, and we actually served 148 3 communities, we were able to assist 18 local 3 households. governments. And then for the number of households For preserving and constructing of 5 supported through acquisition of existing units --6 and this is again our home buyer program, 6 affordable housing, we were able to -- let's see here. So six households, housing units, were specifically under HOME -- we had a goal of 50; we actually served 22 households. 8 constructed for rental properties; 148 units were 9 rehabilitated for rental properties; and then one One other item that we wanted to unit was rehabilitated that included a homeowner 10 highlight for folks is our monitoring benefit; and 22 households were assisted with 11 accomplishments. So for the scope of work, direct financial assistance. And this is our home 12 monitoring or construction monitoring, we had buyer down payment assistance program that that three CDBG projects monitored, two HOME projects 14 number reflects. monitored, and two HTF projects monitored. And then for reduce homelessness, we had 15 And then for the HOME program 15 16 120 households provided tenant based rental 16 specifically, we have what is called period of assistance. That number is a little bit shy of 17 affordability monitoring. This is monitoring that our original goal. Part of the reason why that is happens after construction is complete, and when the case is because of the delay in program funds 19 housing properties are in operation. We were able being receipted by the State, just to do with a 20 to monitor one project during year one. little bit of a different timeline that we had for 21 And one thing to note here is that the submission and approval, and then an actual 22 State of Montana had a waiver in place from HUD 22 receipt of allocation of funds. 23 because of corona virus or COVID-19. We have not And then we had 117 persons assisted 24 been completing monitoring because it's onsite and 24 25 with overnight shelter, and 180 persons assisted 25 in person. That should be picking up here in the

> Page 14 Page 16

1 with homelessness prevention. Again, that number

- 2 is a little bit lower, also because of the delay
- 3 in funds.
- And then for revitalized local
- 5 economies, we had 16 jobs created or retained.
- And one thing that I did want to note, just upon
- concluding the figures here that are presented, is
- 8 that we really provide goals and expected or
- 9 anticipated outcomes based on historical figures,
- 10 and so these do tend to fluctuate from year to
- year, and it can be difficult to anticipate the
- 12 exact numbers, just because a lot of our programs
- are competitive, and it's difficult for the State
- 14 to anticipate exactly what activities are going to
- be proposed, and awarded, and completed. 15
- So next slide. We have the figures here 16
- for affordable housing. And again, this is in the 17
- CAPER document. And I can just highlight that our
- 19 goals for the number of households to receive
- 20 rental assistance was 600; the actual number of
- 21 households served was 194.
- The number of households supported 22
- 23 through new production of units, we had a goal of
- 24 14; actual numbers served was six.
- For households supported through 25

- 1 next several months, but we did have a little bit
- 2 of a lower outcome for monitoring those POA home
- 3 projects, because of our waiver, and because of
- 4 extenuating circumstances, which I know everybody
- is aware of.
- And then for ESG, all nine of our ESG
- subrecipients, procedures, and case files were 7
- monitored during onsite visits during year one.
- For those who haven't found the document
- 10 on Commerce's website yet, we've listed our URL
- 11 here. That URL is https://commerce.mt.gov/
- 12 consolidated-plan/documents, and you're welcome to
- 13 just get into our presentation which is available
- 14 on our website as well, if you want to just go
- 15 directly, click directly on this link.
- And then we also have the CAPER document
- 17 available at depositories throughout the state.
- 18 There's a full list of these depositories on our
- 19 website. And for those who would like a hard
- 20 copy, they can also request, and we can provide
- 21 that by request.
- 22 And for those that have comments or
- 23 questions, we ask that you direct those comments
- 24 and questions to either the Department of Commerce
- 25 or the Department of Public Health and Human

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- 1 comments, please let us know. Or sorry. Hands
- So Commerce is located at 301 South Park
- 4 Avenue in Helena, Montana 59601. Our Interim

1 Services. We have contact information for both of

- Administrator is Cheryl Cohen, and our Interim
- Operations Manager is Becky Anseth. Phone number
- is 406-841-2770. And you can email questions and
- 8 comments to DOCConplan@mt.gov. Our website is
- also listed here.

3

For DPHHS, they are located at 1400 10

2 these agencies on the following slides.

- Carter Drive, Helena, Montana 59601. And actually 11
- this says interim. I should have actually
- corrected that. The current Administrator is Gene
- 14 Hermanson. If you look at our slides on the
- website, we actually had the Interim Administrator
- 16 listed, but Gene Hermanson is the current
- Administrator. And then Sara Loewen is serving as 17
- Bureau Chief. The phone number for DPHHS is 18
- 406-447-4265, and the website is www.dphhs.mt.gov.
- Okay. So we are at that portion of the 20
- 21 hearing where we are going to be opening up to
- public comment. And just a couple of items that I 22
- wanted to cover prior to delving right in is that
- Commerce and DPHHS will consider and provide
- written responses to all comments received, and

- 2 raised, please let us know.
- MS. PROUL: It looks like Shyla has her 3
- hand up, and I have opened her up for talking.
- MS. EGLI: Okay. Thank you, Anita.
- MS. PATERA: Good morning, Commerce and
- DPHHS staff. For the record, my name is Shyla
- Patera, spelled S-H-Y-L-A P-A-T-E-R-A. I
- 9 represent North Central Independent Living, and
- also am a member of the Montana Independent Living
- 11 Community Living Task Force, which helps Montanans
- 12 navigate services to stay independent in their
- 13 communities.
- I will be submitting written comments,
- 15 but a few of the things that I would like to focus
- on today remind us that COVID is still present,
- and for many of us with disabilities and low
- income, we may be still needing to utilize rental
- assistance. 19
- 20 So I'm hoping that a lot of the people
- 21 that I've referred and have disabilities have been
- 22 using it as well, but I'd like to see that
- 23 tracked; and if in the future, when COVID funding
- 24 doesn't manifest itself in the same way, if we
- 25 could formalize some rental assistance through

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- 1 that all comments received and responses provided
- will be documented in our final CAPER.
- And here throughout this hearing, it's 3
- possible that Commerce and DPHHS will respond to
- verbal comments in order to provide clarification
- 6 or to provide further information, but please know
- that our formal comments will be provided in our
- final CAPER.
- 9 So if you have a comment and are joining
- via webinar, you're welcome to raise your hand, so 10
- that we can unmute you, and Anita will be unmuting
- folks today and facilitating with that. Thank
- you, Anita. If you have comments and are joining
- via phone, you're welcome to press star nine to
- raise your hand, and then star six to unmute and 15
- remute yourself. And Anita will be facilitating
- who is on the floor for providing comment. 17
- When you're providing comment, please 18
- 19 state and spell your name, and state the
- organization you represent, if that is applicable.
- So with that said, let's go ahead and note that
- 22 comments are going to be receipted up until June
- 23 25th at 5:00 p.m., and comments regarding the
- 24 draft 2020-2021 CAPER are being accepted now
- 25 during this webinar. So Anita, if we have any

- 1 HRDC's and other things, and also work with
- 2 eviction and homeless prevention in that way.
- During our stay at home orders, and
- 4 particularly again I'm also hearing about the need
- -- not necessarily the need for food, but making
- 6 sure that I have enough funding, if someone is on
- SSI or SSDI, to maintain things. And I know
- 8 during the stay at home, obviously it was very
- 9 vital.
- Our centers are working on vaccines and 10
- 11 different things to make sure that we all maximize
- 12 the use of our vaccines and medical assistance
- where needed. 13
- As a homeless and infrastructure 14
- 15 advocate, a lot of times, in non-COVID times and
- 16 even during COVID times, I've been assisting
- people who may be meeting homelessness that have
- come out of institutions, such as Warm Springs,
- 19 nursing homes, and other institutions such as
- 20 veterans homes, or other needs.
- I would like to see us take advantage of 21
- 22 the new rules for MFP, which is money follows a
- person, and make sure that that is the strongest
- 24 we can make it.
- 25 On our emergency sheltering grants, I

Page 21 Page 23 1 would like to see a lot of information MS. McMILAN: Thank you. I want to

- 2 disseminated, not just from members, but what is
- 3 actually needed by persons with disabilities or
- 4 mental health. A lot of communities don't have
- access to substance use disorders or co-occurring
- shelters or accessible shelters, and sometimes
- sheltering managers aren't sure what to do
- 8 regarding Medicaid and home and community based
- service assistance.
- So if that is something we can work on, 10
- 11 and even working with Medicare as well to see if
- we can get home and community based services, both
- in-home and beyond indoor shelters, so that
- someone could at least have support while they're
- facing homelessness, or potential diversion from
- homelessness would be a great opportunity. 16
- As far as construction and 17
- infrastructure, I believe that we need to have a 18
- rehabilitation home fund for those that are
- currently in home and can't afford new universally
- 21 designed construction.
- As always NCILS, which I work for, and 22
- the other centers, advocate for accessible
- 24 affordable housing in universal design and visible
- 25 context. We hope that bonds or be undertaken to

- 2 thank the Department for all of their work. My
- 3 name is Heather McMilan. I am the project
- development director for Homeward. I'm Heather
- McMilin, M-C-M-I-L-I-N. I testified yesterday at
- the Annual Action Plan, and would reiterate those
- comments, but also I want to thank staff for all
- the work in the restructuring you all have done, I
- 9 know this is a lot in the last 18 months, and we
- appreciate you all.
- I'd like to support Shyla's testimony as 11
- 12 well. Some of the things that we talked about
- 13 yesterday and could carry forward to today is that
- 14 there are long term impacts to our housing markets
- 15 across the board for probably the next decade to
- 16 come.
- 17 And so I'm advocating today that all the
- 18 resources that we've typically gotten, but also
- 19 resources that are coming in without rules at this
- 20 point, that we try to open up the bandwidth, and
- 21 try to make sure with all the federal rules that
- 22 we don't restrict, more restrict as you are able
- 23 to do, as a jurisdiction, at the State level,
- 24 because I think we don't know all of the problems
- 25 we're going to have, and that we need to be as

Page 22 Page 24

- 1 encourage development of those homes, particularly
- when requests come before the Board of Housing as
- 3 well, including like ADA, the small competitive
- grant, CDBG and CDB still have.
- 5 I'm hoping that we can coordinate our
- sidewalk and community development, so that we're
- not walking nowhere as well, and hopefully
- communities will use Main Street Development, and
- also partner with MDT, and others to look at bus
- and bus facility improvements, if they need
- facilities for -- and use them for transit as 11
- 12
- And I will be submitting written 13
- 14 comments beyond these, and I'd like to
- congratulate everyone at Montana Department of 15
- Commerce, Montana Department of Housing, and
- Montana DPHHS for the work in partnering forward, 17
- and I hope that you contact your Centers for
- 19 Independent Living in Montana to include those
- advocates and consumers where necessary. Thank
- you very much. 21
- MS. EGLI: Thank you, Shyla. Anita, I'm 22
- seeing Heather McMilin has a hand raised. 23
- MS. PROUL: Heather is clear to talk. 24
- 25 **MS. EGLI:** Okay. Thank you.

- 1 flexible as we can to address homelessness, also
- 2 moderate income, and even middle income, as our
- 3 housing markets are stressed, and land and home
- 4 prices skyrocket, both on rental and home
- ownership.
- So any flexibility you can all have.
- You've always been great partners, but just
- 8 reiterating that we need to remain as flexible as
- 9 possible, and get as creative as possible over the
- 10 next period of time as we're addressing needs, all
- 11 of the existing needs, that they're being
- 12 complicated by long term impacts of costs. It
- 13 creates labor shortages and housing stock
- 14 shortages.
- 15 I would say there was testimony to this
- effect, and if you all could consider that there
- are projects that are surviving right now that
- 18 were in various stages of development, or
- 19 preservation, or trying to get started, or
- 20 completing, and these are issues that have
- 21 significant financial impacts for for-profit and
- 22 non-profit groups.
- 23 And if there's a way that we can work
- 24 with Montana Housing. They've already passed a
- 25 cost per unit waiver on those projects for what

June 23, 2021 Page 25 Page 27 1 has happened, and the impacts we've seen over the 1 up. Still no hands, Anita? 2 last 18 months. If there's a way to potentially MS. PROUL: No, no hands. 3 add resources to those projects that have already MS. EGLI: Okay. We can wrap up. I 3 4 been funded without unintended consequences to 4 just want to say thank you to everybody who took time to join us today, and to provide comment, and 5 help with some of those costs, that would be wonderful, as well as keeping as many resources as 6 helps us to guide and respond to the needs -- who we can to move new projects forward, both in helps guide our process, and who help us respond to the needs that are in our communities here in 8 rehabilitation, preservation, and new 9 construction. 9 Montana. Thank you again for all of your work, We really appreciate the engagement that 10 10 11 and there is nothing simple about how things are 11 we have from the organizations that we partner going today. We appreciate you guys listening and 12 with, and the private citizens who have an 12 taking the testimony. 13 interest in this work, and I will just take a 13 MS. EGLI: Thank you, Heather. Anita, 14 14 moment also to thank Anita, Taylor, Julie, and 15 are you seeing any other hands raised at this Cheryl, and all of the staff who help with the **16** time? efforts of the Consolidated Plan at Commerce. A

20

17 **MS. PROUL:** I do not see any, Janelle. MS. EGLI: I'll take just a second to 18 19 reiterate the instructions for providing comment via webinar or via phone, just in case folks joined after we stated it. 21 If you would like to provide a comment

22 23 and are joining via webinar, you can raise your 24 hand so that we can unmute you; and if you're 25 joining via phone, you can press star nine to

21 once our recording is ready to go, we will get 22 that posted onto our website. Thank you, and we look forward to hearing more from those of you who 24 have comments yet to provide. Thank you. 25 (The proceedings were concluded at 11:41 a.m.)

lot of hands go into keeping us on the right

So we'll conclude today's meeting, and

19 as well as at DPHHS.

track, and so thank you to the staff at Commerce,

Page 26 1 indicate you have a comment, and then star six and unmute and remute yourself. We'll leave the floor open for a little 3 4 bit longer, so if you have comments, feel free to 5 raise your hand or press star nine. 6 (No response) MS. EGLI: Okay. Still not seeing any 8 hands, Anita? 9 **MS. PROUL:** No hands raised. MS. EGLI: Okay. We can go ahead and 10 wrap up. Just one more time for the record, I'll state that comments will be received up until 5:00 p.m. on June 25th, 2021 for the CAPER document. 13 We do have a couple of other documents 14 15 out for comment right now, so it's important to note that this June 25th deadline is specifically for the CAPER. 17 And you can send comments to the 18 19 Department of Commerce via email or via snail mail. Our physical address is Montana Department of Commerce, Community Development Division, 22 Attention: Con Plan. P.O. Box 200523, Helena. Montana 59620-0523. And our email address is 24 DOCConplan@mt.gov.

I think that we can go ahead and wrap

Page 28 1 STATE OF MONTANA 3 : SS. 4 COUNTY OF LEWIS & CLARK 5 I, LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR, Court Reporter, 6 Notary Public in and for the County of Lewis & 7 Clark, State of Montana, do hereby certify: 8 That the proceedings were taken before me at 9 the time and place herein named; that the 10 proceedings were reported by me in shorthand and 11 transcribed using computer-aided transcription, 12 and that the foregoing - 27 - pages contain a true 13 record of the proceedings to the best of my 14 ability. 15 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my 16 hand and affixed my notarial seal this 28th day of 17 June, 2021. 18 19 20 LAURIE J. CRUTCHER 21 NOTARY PUBLIC for the 22 State of Montana Residing at Helena, Montana 23 My Commission Expires March 9, 2024 24 25

25

2020-2021 CAI EK I UDII	ic Hearing		1	June 25, 2021
	8:12;24:10	anticipated (1)	bit (7)	4:14
\$	adheres (1)	14:9	5:6;8:1;13:17,21;	Cheryl (2)
Ψ	7:10	applicable (1)	14:2;16:1;26:4	17:5;27:15
\$14.1 (1)	administer (2)	18:20	Block (1)	Chief (1)
11:8	7:21,24	appreciate (3)	7:20	17:18
\$300,000 (1)	administered (3)	23:10;25:12;27:10	Board (2)	circle (1)
11:13	7:7,18;10:11	approval (1)	22:2;23:15	8:4
\$4 (3)	Administrator (4)	13:22	bonds (1)	circumstances (1)
11:11,12;12:11	17:5,13,15,17	approved (2)	21:25	16:4
\$5.5 (1)	advantage (1)	5:15;6:15	both (8)	citizens (2)
11:10	20:21	April (2)	5:7;9:16;11:6,19;	6:5;27:12
\$8 (1)	advocate (2)	10:15,16	17:1;21:12;24:4;25:7	clarification (1)
12:10	20:15;21:23	Arey (1)	bottom (1)	18:5
	advocates (1)	2:17	12:7	clear (1)
${f A}$	22:20	assess (1)	box (2)	22:24
<u></u>	advocating (1)	5:21	4:20;26:22	click (1)
AAP's (1)	23:17	assist (2)	break (1)	16:15
9:18	affected (1)	12:25;13:3	9:23	close (2)
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